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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 000055

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SUBJECT: TFHA01: Venezuela Plans Two Flights For January 21; Ignores Offer To Coordinate Relief Efforts With The U.S.

REF: STATE 4909; STATE 4807; STATE 4854

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Defense AttachC) spoke on January 20 with Dr. Luis Diaz Curbelo, National Director of Civil Defense. Diaz confirmed prior sea and air shipments to Haiti. Diaz added that Venezuelan ships were bound for the Dominican Republic instead of Haiti. The GBRV will contact the U.N. to secure overland passage or relief supplies. Two flights to Haiti are currently scheduled for January 21. Requests for meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Joint Armed Forces staff equivalent to coordinate relief efforts have gone unanswered. End Summary.

By Air

¶2. (SBU) The GBRV has one IL-76 and one C-130 flight to deliver assistance planned for January 21. Diaz noted that although the flights had been ready to depart earlier, they were unable to receive a landing time for January 20.

Prior Flights

¶3. (SBU) A C-130 transport aircraft departed on January 13, reportedly with 50 personnel, including an advance assessment team and relief supplies. A second C-130 took off January 15 with about 25 personnel, including a second team to assess aviation support requirements. The GBRV Ministry of Communications announced on January 17 that 14 tons of food, water and medicine, accompanied by an unknown number of personnel, were transported on a third C-130. Two Russian-operated IL-76 cargo planes carried approximately 80 tons of first aid supplies and an additional 120 Venezuelans on January 17.

By Sea

¶4. (SBU) Diaz confirmed for the DATT that five ships that have departed Venezuela with aid for Haiti will make port in the Dominican Republic where the GBRV will ask the U.N. to secure passage of the relief supplies overland into Haiti. Diaz verified that two of the vessels were "ALBA" ships. Official media claimed that the two ALBA ships departed Puerto Cabello carrying 4,761 tons of food. In addition, official sources reported that 126 volunteers of the "Simon Bolivar International Brigade" were embarked on the two amphibious ships that departed January 18.

Prior Sorties

15. (SBU) Two ALLIGATOR Class amphibious landing ships carrying 616 tons of food and 176 tones of heavy machinery left port from La Guaira on January 18.

16. (SBU) A PDVSA tanker carrying approximately 225,000 barrels of diesel and gasoline was en route to a refinery in the Dominican Republic.

Coordination

17. (SBU) The DATT has not been able to meet with the Venezuelan Joint Staff or to arrange for a Venezuelan naval liaison officer in Haiti.

CARACAS 00000055 002 OF 002

18. (SBU) The Foreign Ministry has not yet responded to post's request to meet to exchange information.
CAULFIELD